

BOOKS OF INTEREST IN REVIEW AND COMMENT

THE BOOK OF THE WEEK.

CAVALRY OF THE CLOUDS. By "Contact" (Capt. Alan Bott, M. C.) (Doubleday, Page & Co.) \$1.50.

Of the war in the air we have thus far heard very little; very little, that is to say, from the inside, from the men who are themselves doing the fighting. From the trenches both officers and men have put forth book after book of experience, combat and reminiscence, with every imaginable variety of literary merit, but none without some measure of that interest for us others at home which inheres in the very nature of the material. The aviators have been almost silent; partly because they are comparatively few, partly no doubt because the type of practical knight errantry which turns by nature to the aerial service is by nature also a type largely inarticulate, more given to wonder than to wonder at its own doings.

However this may be, we are now just beginning to get the first few war books of the air, and this book has therefore all of that novel and special interest which belonged of prior right to the first few personal records of the war on earth. It is just such a plain, direct account of individual experience as we have received over and over again from the soldiers in the field, from Peat and Empey and a score of others. Only this is from a soldier overhead, a cavalryman of the clouds; and what he has to tell us of his work comes with the astonishment of news. Capt. Bott's book has nothing of the trained observation and skilful handling that go to make Ian Hay's books something close upon literature. He is not an author but an aviator. Yet this is by no means to say that he writes badly. On the contrary, he writes like an officer and a gentleman, modest, humorous in the face of hardship and of danger, vividly intelligent and alive, an amateur in the best and in the literal sense, a lover of his work and wholeheartedly enthusiastic in speaking of it. His writing is not without a charm that comes of humor and interest in his subject and a modesty too genuine to make a parade even of being modest. He tells eagerly enough how other men won the Military Cross, but not how he came by his own.

Yet with all this, the main appeal of the book is the appeal of matter rather than of manner, of sheer substance and reality of detail. The perfectly natural offhand tone in speaking of that routine of adventure, that commonplace of desperate crises which make up the daily task of the aviator, is none the less striking because it is wholly to be expected. To speak of an airplane habitually as a "gun," to refer to anti-aircraft guns as "arches," and to the incendiary rocket dropped in the rear of one's own engine, so that there is no temptation to dodge—these things are just what he would say, of course. And yet that very circumstance makes them exciting. There is something of the same thrill with which we first read Kipling's familiar stories of strange lands; no matter of literary artistry, but merely that any man should seem so at home in such a place. And now, today, when all earth and sea are long since mapped and plotted, there remains on this side of Letho no such undiscovered country as the air.

Sometimes and only very rarely there is found a perfect title for a book—one which suggests perfectly, without telling too much, the book's whole point and character and essence, which is itself at once accurate and fascinating. Surely this title is a case in point; everything that the book stands for is here implied, the title alone is a criticism and a character. And what a phrase that is, *The Cavalry of the Clouds*!

HARRY BUTTERS, R. F. A., LIFE AND LETTERS. Edited by Mrs. Denis O'Sullivan. (John Lane Company.) \$1.50.

The trouble with the California Boost is that it is the old story of "Wolf! Wolf!" inverted. That happy State lauds to the skies her every mediocrity with as loud and so persistent acclamation that she has no stronger terms left in which to praise the more deserving. Having habitually magnified every mouse, what remains to say of the true lion? That is the one reason why the present book deserves and demands a certain apology in order that one may consider it fairly.

We have here the letters home of an American who went early to the war, became an officer in the British army, and fought and died in France for that cause which his own nation had not yet recognized to be its own. He did this very intelligently, very consciously, and almost self-consciously. But that would be the precise injustice which we are trying to avoid. These letters were never written for publication. On the contrary, they are such intimacies as a young man writes to his own family and his nearest friends. And there is good reason to suppose that their publication would have given him more qualms than their occasional tears can possibly give the reader. Also,

"Contact!" is the cry that sends them droning up to the roof of the world to face the wicked "tut, tut, tut," of the machine-guns of the Hun flyers. Capt. Alan Bott ("Contact") has written no technical description of aeronautics, but the true story of the amazing day-to-day lives of the airmen of the Allies. It lifts the heart to read

"CAVALRY OF THE CLOUDS" BY "CONTACT" (CAPT. ALAN BOTT, M. C.)

Spies and Submarines and the Lone Wolf in a wartime story of Secret Service. On the trail of the Potsdam gang from No-Man's Land to Martha's Vineyard and Broadway, the Lone Wolf beats the Frussians at their own game.

"THE FALSE FACES" BY LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

The Long, Long Thoughts of a boy who sees in a commonplace wood-patch wonderful things that escape our older gaze are put down by James Lane Allen's sympathetic pen in his latest book. Seldom has he written with such insight as he shows in

"THE KENTUCKY WARBLER" BY JAMES LANE ALLEN

They Met the War with spirits unafraid when it took from this American father and mother their only boy. For all who are facing the realities of war this simple little book will prove an unfailing inspiration.

"THE FULL MEASURE OF DEVOTION" BY DANA GATLIN

At Your Bookstore DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & CO. GARDEN CITY, NEW YORK

Lone Wolf; who, having lost his wife and child at the hands of the Boche in Belgium, now reappears as the adventurous deadly enemy of Germany in general and of the German secret service in particular. The Lone Wolf is not quite a character; but he is an effective and melodramatic figure, and the narrative of his desperate adventures and escapes moves fast and affords plenty of thrills. It is more deftly written than its predecessors, more manly and soundly without any loss of vividness; the dialogue plausible, the descriptive passages not without something akin to style. And more than once the melodrama is lightened by a flash of humor.

The weak point of the story is an imperfectly restrained tendency to draw the long bow. Lanyard drowning in the sea might well enough be rescued by the submarine which stops the ship from which he had fallen overboard; but it is too much to represent that submarine as actually and accurately rising beneath him where he swam and lifting him upon its back. Or again where he ends an exciting chase on a Fifth Avenue stage by clutching the elevated structure at the bus passes beneath and clambering up to the tracks. This sort of thing, and there are other instances—is really a bit too strong. It is moving picture stuff, in the least complimentary sense of the term. And the story is quite good enough to get along without such extreme measures. If Mr. Vance's next story is to be better still it need hardly be better written nor better planned; but it will have to be a bit more consistently plausible.

PLAY PRODUCTION IN AMERICA. By Arthur Edwin Krows. (Henry Holt.) \$2.

One of the most significant and useful books yet published on the technical side of the play business is Arthur Edwin Krows's *Play Production in America*. The reader who demands practical information will find it here in abundance. The author plunges at once into the subject with the chapter "The Play Is Accepted"—a good deal to take for granted, it is true, but there are other books, he might well assert, which attempt to instruct the tyro into the mysterious process of getting his play accepted. There follow a few brief and sound paragraphs on play readers and the sort of play demanded. "Contracts," "Plagiarism," "Play Doctors" are then considered. The decidedly summary fashion in which "Voice," "Gesture," "Conception of the Part" are dealt with is amusing, but undoubtedly Mr. Krows intended merely to indicate a subject capable of more detailed description. After a chapter on "Directors" we are taken behind the stage. Mr. Krows comes to his task with plenty of assurance, but his assurance is backed by many years' experience. His personally conducted excursion through the mysteries backstage is informing and interesting, and what he has to say on lighting, scenery and the various devices necessary to shift scenes and manipulate lights is valuable both to the director and the layman. There is a great deal of purely supplementary matter devoted to advertising, routing, orchestras and ticket speculation which is out of place, it seems, in such a book, but which makes good reading none the less. *Play Production in America* is a reference work which will not soon become out of date. It fills a distinct place, and fills it well.

ROBIN HOOD. By Paul Creswick. (David McKay.) \$2.50.

After all, Robin Hood is about the nicest hero of childhood because he is as beloved by little girls as by little boys. There is all the gallantry and chivalry, the charm and mystery dear to feminine hearts, be they six or sixty, and all the adventure and bravery, the daring and cunning worshipped enviously by males of eight years or eighty. Shall you ever forget, if you belong to the masterful sex, how Robin's arrow split the eye of Hubert of Normandy, quivering in the very centre of the bullseye? Or if you are one of the numerous eternal females, shall you ever be able to remember without a little sigh of contentment how Robin passed by the sheriff's daughter, or the golden arrow to Maid Marian? Or would you would have been Maid Marian had you lived then. And Little John—do you remember when he threw Robin into the river? And pulled him out again to take his hand and become one of his most faithful followers? And now that you are grown up, can you almost cry at the tragedy of gallant Robin's death? They really should have a copy of *Robin Hood*, you know—these precious children. And Mr. Creswick's version is exquisitely written and illustrated with full page colored pictures of Robin, broad shouldered and blond, of dark eyed Maid Marian, and rough Little John, and of the Greenwood.

WHY NOT MARRY? By Anna Steens Richardson. (Bobbs-Merrill Co.) \$1.40.

Mrs. Richardson's book seems to be based upon the assumption that most women are unwilling to marry, because they fear that their prospective husbands cannot support them in the style to which they have been accustomed, or think they should eventually become accustomed, and that most of them are afraid that their prospective husbands will be unable to give up the irresponsibility of youth for the cares and duties of a home. Every one seems to want to be married, and no one in the book seems to do it. Although perhaps it is as well. For a book on marriage *Why Not Marry?* seems to dodge the issue more times than it faces it. It is written in a chatty, irritating style which is deadly unless one takes the book humorously. As humorists the men and women readers of the *Pictorial Review*, to which many of these contributions were sent, make Mark Twain, Shaw, Chesterton and George Ade sound like the most serious passages of the one humdrum book of the Bible. In the sake of temperance a young

man, should ring true to soldiers who have known the reality.

What Mark Twain Thought of Himself.

Mark Twain's summary of his own many-sidedness is revealed in one of his letters to William Dean Howells, just issued, in *Mark Twain's Letters*. He was a miner, he says, a prospector, a Mississippi pilot and a traveling printer. "And," he adds, "I was a lecturer on the public platform number of seasons, and so I know a great many secrets about audiences—secrets not to be got out of books. . . . And I am a publisher . . . and I have been an author for twenty years and an ass for fifty-five. Now then, as the most valuable capital or culture or education usable in the building of novels is personal experience I ought to be well equipped for that trade. I surely have the equipment, a wide culture and all of it real, none of it artificial, for I don't know anything about books."

Prisoner in Germany Likes American Novel.

Philip Curtiss, author of *Between Two Worlds*, received a few days ago a letter from an unknown Canadian soldier who is a prisoner in Germany. Somehow he had picked up a copy of Mr. Curtiss's earlier novel, *The Ladder*, and in his gratitude for his enjoyment he wrote: "I thought it might give you pleasure to know that a regular soldier in the Gordon Highlanders, a French sergeant and a Welsh miner have all expressed a wish to read this altogether delightful story, a striking testimony to the breadth of your appeal. Here's looking at you, Mr. Curtiss." Mr. Curtiss says that he is particularly pleased to know that *The Ladder*, which describes among other things the sensations of a man in battle, written before the war be-

havior is made to quote: "What did the chap in the book say about a jug of water, some verses and a girl in a wilderness? Why not at least a jug of chocolate cream soda, your husband—or even grape juice? But read the book and be amused for yourself."

THE DEATH CRY. By Darby Hauck. (Robert J. Shores.) \$1.50.

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A CRUSADER OF FRANCE

Translated from the French of Captain Ferdinand Belmont

Introduction by Henry Bordeaux

OPINIONS WORTH READING

Miss Katherine Lee Bates, in a letter to the publisher, says: "I have read every word of 'A Crusader of France,' moved to the depths of my soul by its poignant earnestness. It gives, too, the clearest picture of actual war conditions, day after day and week after week and month after month, that I have ever seen."

John S. Phillips, *Red Cross Magazine*, says: "My heart thanks for 'A Crusader of France.' I have never read such a direct transference to the printed page of a pure and beautiful spirit. So far as I know this is the clearest and truest picture of the war that has been produced. What hope is there in the suggestion of the purified soul? And from your professional standpoint, what faith in man's expanding ability to express his deepest self? You have left me in your debt."

Rev. Livingston L. Taylor says: "I am reading 'A Crusader of France' with something more than interest. It is a wonderful book in some respects. I think more wonderful than 'A Student in Arms,' with which one instinctively associates it. It is particularly stirring to all that is best in our hopes for the days to come to get this living word out of the heart of the Roman Church. To know Donald Stanley through 'A Student in Arms' and Ferdinand Belmont through his *Letters from the Front* helps to make it seem worth while that *John* should have prayed that we all might be one. Many windows through which we may look into the soul of France have been opened, but none through which it is a more delightful and reassuring experience to look."

Price, Net, \$1.50. Postage Extra. At All Bookstores.

E. P. DUTTON & CO., 681 Fifth Ave., N. Y.

preparation for publication some time this spring.

Harper Books to be Reprinted. Harper & Brothers announce that they will put to press next week for reprints the following books: *The Eyes of the Army and Navy*, by Albert H. Munday, R. N.; *The Adventures*, by Arthur B. Reeve; *Three Gidgones in Venezuela and Central America*, by Richard Harding Davis; and *How to Drive*, by Leon Barritt.

Rams Grey in Florida.

Rams Grey as soon as he had finished reading the proofs of his new novel, *The U. P. Trail*, which was published last week, started off on his annual holiday to Florida. He will spend several weeks fishing at Long Key. Mr. Grey has confessed that it is not only fish which he catches on these excursions, but ideas for future books.

Read the thrilling story of three months' travels through Germany in these days, without a pass, as told by

J. M. de Beaufort

in

BEHIND THE GERMAN VEIL

Now in its sixth edition

At all bookstores. Illustrated, \$2.00

Dodd, Mead & Co., Publishers.

ple that he should be seen and not heard, but follow him, listen carefully to his retreating footsteps, be his minister or street car conductor. Now perhaps you will be able to find the murderer in Darby Hauck's next hair raising tale.

grave! And in the last chapter, of course, the murderer turns out to be the only logical person who could have been guilty, the one character introduced quietly into the story with little explanation, and forgotten by the reader because he seemed so unnecessary and harmless. Never trust the writer of mystery stories; he does nothing without a reason. When you find him trying to push an embarrassed, unassuming person into a paragraph, never let this new and quietly behaved character wander far from your sight. He works on the principle

America's Heatless "Holidays"

While the New York *World* calls Fuel Commissioner Garfield's conservation order the "greatest disaster that has befallen the United States in this war," and other journals are equally emphatic in condemning it, many other American newspapers view the action with tolerance, as being a necessary war measure, the Boston *Herald* declaring that "we should not criticize military orders no matter how needlessly sweeping they seem, and in the same spirit we approach these provisions for the conservation of our resources."

"The port of New York is part of the battle-line," says Public Service Commissioner Whitney of New York, in the *Times*, "and the people should realize this as clearly as if the battle-line lay in the Connecticut Valley. The coal situation is exceedingly critical and it is no time for public officials to rock the boat."

In THE LITERARY DIGEST for January 26th, public opinion, as reflected in the newspaper press from all sections of the country, is presented in the leading article dealing with Commissioner Garfield's drastic coal conservation order.

All phases of the subject are dwelt upon in this article, and a careful reading of it will make clear to the American people just why this order was necessary, how it will be carried out, and what its probable effects will be.

Other topics of pressing interest in this number of "The Digest" are:

British Labor's Appeal to the German People

"Peoples of Central Europe," British Labor Entreats, "Do Not Let Your Governments Drive the British People, As They Are Driving the Russian People, Into the Terrible Choice Between Continuing the War and Abandoning the Only Principles That Can Save the World."

The Call for a War Lord

Both Sides Veto President's "Free Sea" Plan

The Next Battle-Thrust

"U"-Boats as Peace Arguments

Are Engineers Narrow-Minded?

Triumph of Secretary Daniels

Thumbs Up for Mathematics

The Fallacy of Cost Plus 10%

Plot Failures in Great Fiction

A Man Who Thinks We Can Pray the Kaiser Off His Throne

Many Interesting Illustrations

"The Digest" a Beacon to Puzzled News-Seekers

In the darkness of night, amid the quicksands and rocks that beset the coasts of the world, many a ship would be lost but for the guiding flare of the lights that the ingenuity of man has placed everywhere for the service of sailors. For the bewildered citizen, battling in the deep waters of politics in these dark days of world-wide storm and stress, urged hither and thither by the thousand contrary currents of shifting

opinion, one steady beacon shines aloft, to direct him into the calm haven of sound judgment—THE LITERARY DIGEST. This great news-magazine, unaffected by the winds or waves of opposing ideas, gathers up for you the vital substance of the world's news, using every source impartially, and makes of it an illuminating beam of world-information. Get into the circle of its radiance to-day and know the truth.

January 26th Number on Sale To-day—All News-dealers—10 Cents

The Literary Digest

FUNK & WAGNALLS COMPANY (Publishers of the Famous NEW Standard Dictionary), NEW YORK